(c) the decision of the Central Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) There was a proposal from the Government of Tripura to handover the existing unused airport at Khowai to the State Government for non-aviation activities. The matter was examined and was not acceded to by Airports Authority of India (AAI) because as per AAI Act, no airport owned by AAI can be transferred to State Government or any other agencies for activities other than aviation purposes. Currently, the matter is under examination at the Government level.

Operation of Air India Express

2790. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Air India Express (AIE), a subsidiary of Air India, has set to operate/to be operated as a low cost, no frills airline;

(b) if so, the details including destinations to be operated during the year 2005-06;

(c) whether baggage that is allowed to be carried by passengers is same as allowed in other airlines operating in the same destination;

(d) if not, whether action will be taken for the same; and

(e) whether steps will be taken to prepare a blueprint for future so as to make AIE as a flagship rather than a subsidiary?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Air India Express would offer lower fare structure overall with basic services such as pre-set meal, in flight entertainment etc. on Board. The proposed destinations to be operated by the airline during the year 2005-06 are from Kozhikode, Kochi, Delhi, Mumbai and Thiruvananthapuram to certain points in Gulf region *viz.* Dubai Abu Dhabi, Al-Ain, Muscat and Salalah.

(c) and (d) Air India Express would be offering 30 kgs. as free baggage allowance which is more than the standard practice of 20 kgs.

(e) No such proposal is under consideration at present. Air India Express will remain a subsidiary of Air India.

Air service between New Delhi and Guwahati

2791. SHRI URKHAO GWRA BRAHMA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government will consider to increase the frequency of Indian Airlines flights between New Delhi and Guwahati;

(b) whether Government will also consider to create new airports in Assam; and

(c) if so, whether it would include the revival of Rupshi Airport which is now under Bodoland Territorial Areas District of Assam?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Indian Airlines has no plan to increase the frequency of flights between New Delhi and Guwahati due to constraints of aircraft capacity and commercial considerations.

(b) Airports Authority of India presently has engaged in upgrading existing airport facilities in Assam.

(c) Does not arise.

Exodus of pilots from State carriers

2792. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that several pilots from State run carriers have left these carriers;

(b) if so, the details of pilots who have left these carriers and joined other private airlines during the last three years;

(c) whether this has badly affected the operations of these carriers;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by Government in this regard?